

URBAN SCULPTURE

ARCHITECTURAL CONCERNS

SEPTEMBER 9, 1983 - JANUARY 4, 1984

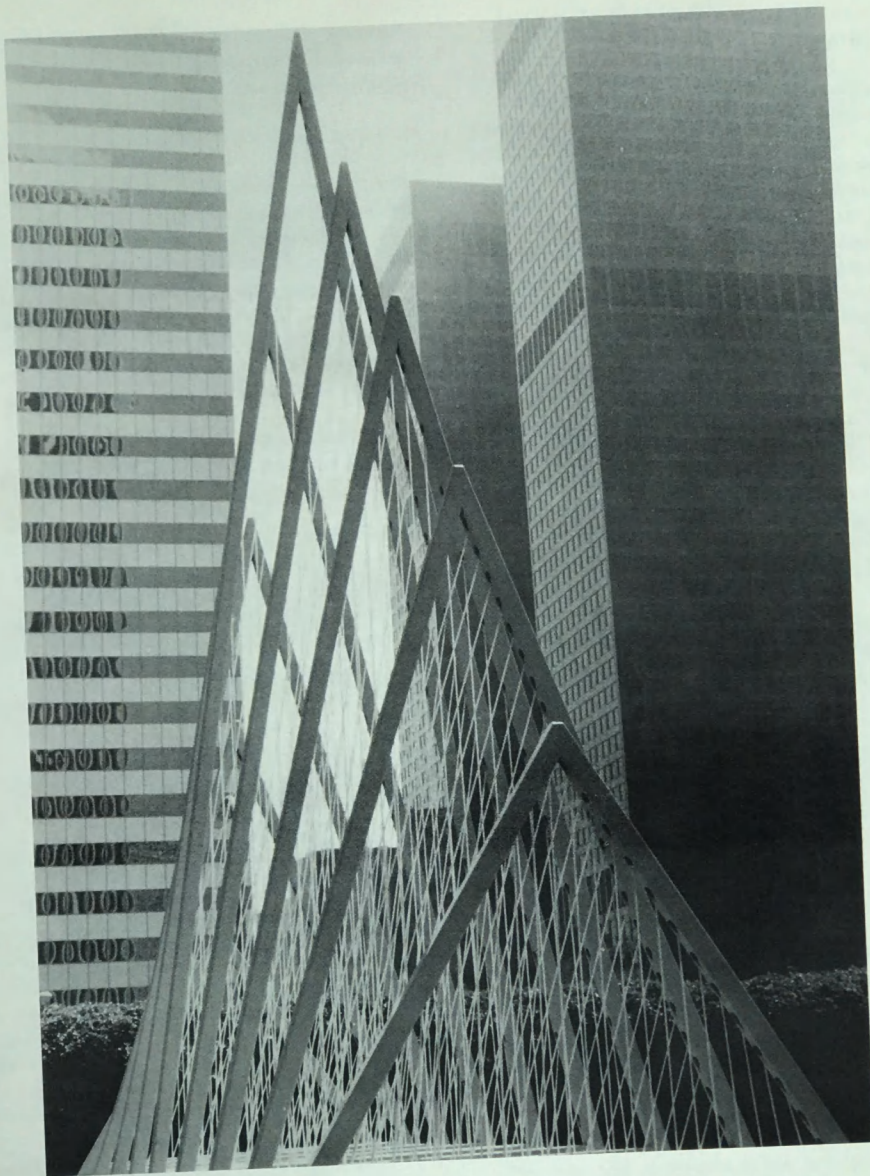
GALLERY AT THE PLAZA

333 SOUTH HOPE STREET

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90071

SECURITY PACIFIC NATIONAL BANK

DAILY 10A.M. - 4:30P.M.



Robert Bassler
Maquette for *Increments of Three*, 1983
Painted steel and dacron rope
18' x 6' x 25'

Robert Bassler

How has your work evolved?

My work over the last 20 years can be defined in a framework. In the 1960s, it was organic, with tangible physical objects. Henry Moore was a strong influence. Over time, it has gone beyond the physical to seek the essences of existence or some kind of perception of universal reality. A sculptor thinks of external form, shape, mass, and volume. I became interested in showing the internal. Resin allowed me to capture it. I started simplifying more and more, and then became disenchanted by the object altogether. I did not want it. What I wanted was the environment that was created by the object. I wanted to enter the object so that it would disappear and be a world in itself. At one point, I went so far beyond the object as an object that I almost stopped being a sculptor then and there. I wanted to deal in environments and light phenomena and perceptions of that kind of environment. I worked in film to capture some of that.

How did light become one of your concerns?

I can tell you how it happened, but I can't tell you precisely why. From the standpoint of sculpture, my early concerns were modernist, constructivist, and biomorphic. When I tried resin, I was instantly dazzled. It was transparent, yet the physical reality was there and the inner reality was there also. It was like the soul and the physical were one. It was a technical challenge to explore and a philosophical adventure.

How does this relate to the work at Security Pacific?

I want people to see the piece and not recognize the physical entity per se. I want them to see the phenomenon within the piece that is the result of the physical interaction called interruption patterns. With regular linear patterns juxtaposed, the intersections cause a rippling effect. They retain the geometry but with slight curvatures. You can see this occurring on freeway overpasses. When you approach an overpass, there are two chain link fences on either side as you are driving toward it. These patterns will flicker and change. You can see this in fields that have been planted regularly and in fences of all sorts. The eye perceives a flow of motion, but it is physically not there. Things exist around us that we are simply not aware of because we are locked in a narrow bank of perception. I am hoping to extend beyond the physical, beyond the experiential to a spiritual level.

Does your work at Security Pacific exemplify an urban or architectural aesthetic?

I am certainly aware of the urban environment although I don't live right in the city. I think the work has architec-

tural references and a site-specific spirit to it. I would not have come up with this piece if it had not been for the pools of water at the Plaza. I don't pretend to think in long thin areas. I tend to work in more pyramidal, triangulated forms. This is a unique piece for me.

What do you think public sculpture contributes?

I would like public art to make us more aware of the variety of ideas in the world in which we live. I think most people are not artistically aware of their environment and do not see. If art placed right in front of them gives clues about new ways of seeing the world, the riches of things available, then public art has a purpose. It is also something to encounter in daily life and does not need a special sanctum to view it and whisper tones that are religious.

If you could work with no limitations imposed on you, what would you do with your art? What is your dream?

I regret not having enough time in this life to explore everything I want to explore. For me to do anything worthwhile, I have to go into an area with depth that allows me to take a certain path. I've opened many doors, and I miss the things I used to do and loved very much. Working with the figure was one. I would like a lot more time, a longer life span, to be able to consider and have the luxury of knowing and producing more.